



WORLD AIDS DAY is marked globally on 1 December.

The Australian national theme for World AIDS Day in 2021 is **40 years of HIV – where to next?** For the bleeding disorders community this is deeply important.

1 December is a day to raise awareness about HIV across the world and in the community.

It is a day when we are mindful of our community members living with HIV, of demonstrating our support for them and commemorating those with HIV who have passed away. Wearing a red ribbon is one way to show that you remember.

But in 2021 1 December is also an opportunity to take stock of the last 40 years and consider the future.

In 1981 AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), a new health condition, was first reported in Australian newspapers and the first case of AIDS was formally diagnosed in 1982. In the mid-1980s the bleeding disorders community in Australia and internationally was devastated when many people with bleeding disorders were diagnosed with AIDS after acquiring HIV through their plasma-derived clotting factor treatment products. HFA's Getting Older report documented the ongoing impact of this epidemic on our community: the trauma and health challenges for those who were diagnosed with HIV and now live with the

consequences, and the grief and sadness experienced by those who lost loved ones and friends to HIV. Not to be overlooked is the emotional impact on the health professionals at the Haemophilia Treatment Centres too, who had cared for their patients with HIV over their lifetime and knew them so well.

Now in Australia HIV infection is usually well-managed with treatment. It is important to recognise the very positive contributions people with bleeding disorders and HIV have made to our community: the inspiring optimism and generosity of individuals with HIV, in spite of all their experiences, speaking out and providing leadership and a way forward into the future.

WHERE TO NEXT?

HFA is marking 40 years of HIV with accounts of the early history. How do we best move into the future? We have asked some community leaders living with HIV for their reflections and thoughts on where next with HIV. We will publish this in the March 2022 issue of *National Haemophilia*.

Visit the HFA website to read more – www.haemophilia.org.au